

City lights

By Russell Davies

IRWIN SHAW and RONALD SEARLE:
Paris! Paris!
211pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£4.95.

You are sitting at a café table, eating your croque-madame, sipping delicately at a Ricard and contemplating the hole your Gaius has burnt in your striped smock the time your bare feet off, when the concierge, Mme Plat, staggers out into the sunshine, adjusts her rustic bonnet, and bows towards you with the unmistakable hip-tilt and frown of a former mannequin, and thrusts a book into your face. "It arrives from England," she purrs. What means your eyes almost makes you drop your croque-madame. This is not a book, it is a publishing event! Irwin Shaw and Ronald Searle have got together and—yet not, *au contraire*. A prefatory note from Shaw explains that the form of the book (suggested by the late Tony Godwin) depends on there having been no direct collaboration between writer and artist. "In the event," Shaw reveals, "Mr Searle never read my text until he had submitted his drawings, and I had never spoken to him about his contribution until his drawings had been mailed from his home in New York. The result is a double view of Paris, not in any way an illustration of the text." Is Shaw altogether pleased about this? You cannot tell. *De plus en plus curieux*. Impatient to read on, you wave Mme Plat away, but she has already departed, called by the sound of *Homme riche*, *homme pauvre* starting upon the tide.

Doubtless you object, gentil lecteur, to being manhandled in this way, being thrust into this impossible scenario and told what to do next, as though you were being trained in some bizarre orthodoxy. But this you are to get used to, because once Shaw has told of the Left Bank tales that first lured him to Paris (he settled there in 1951 for an unforeseen twenty-five years of exile), and added a strangely delicious account of his part in the earlier liberation (which the best part of the book in the sense that it slips into a precise novelistic tone), he is all for putting "you" where "I" should be, and ordering you about all over the city. This would not be an bad if he had not cast you as a time traveller, a time traveller with a tendency to identification: "You start at a café table because everything in Paris starts at a café table. You are waiting for the girl you love. She is young and beautiful and perfect. She has straight legs and enormous breasts and she likes to hear you talk and she is imaginary." "You," you see, are not destined to have much fun. And as time goes on, you have to feel in with the most ghastly metaphorical schemes; "While the sun shines, you go along with the cliché-makers: Paris is a beautiful woman and so surprisingly so, so vital and self-renewing, that nothing—not the passage of years, not drink or drugs, not bad investments or unworthy loves, not neglect or

debauchery—can ruin her. Not while the sun shines.

Whether or not Shaw has any choice in the matter of "going along" with the cliché-makers is something many severe readers will have decided as early as the first sentence in the book "Like all affairs, my affair with Paris has gone through many stages." But it is only during one of "off" periods of this on-off romance that Shaw unveils his speciality. Let Phoebus once duck behind nature's arras, taking the bloom off to *in eia rose*, and Shaw is suddenly in business, producing not clichés so much as lists: Paris in the winter is for connoisseurs of melancholy—lovers soon to be parted, merchants on the edge of bankruptcy, poets caught between rhymes and remittances, men caught between checks, horse owners whose steeds have just come in last, playwrights who have just had a failure, women whose husbands have left them for younger, prettier, smarter, richer, and all-round better girls; Paris in the winter is for depressed kings, discovered spies, leaders of peace movements.

But most of all, you may think (at least I offer you the choice), it is for making long, mock-tragic recitations that sound like the mid-sections of Charles Aznavour's songs. "The social variety and mercantile convenience of his home quarter set Shaw off on another such, this time a sort of hymn to superficiality: 'Without the need of taking a taxi or bus,' he raves, 'I could buy a heavy-duty valve for a large, incomprehensible machine,

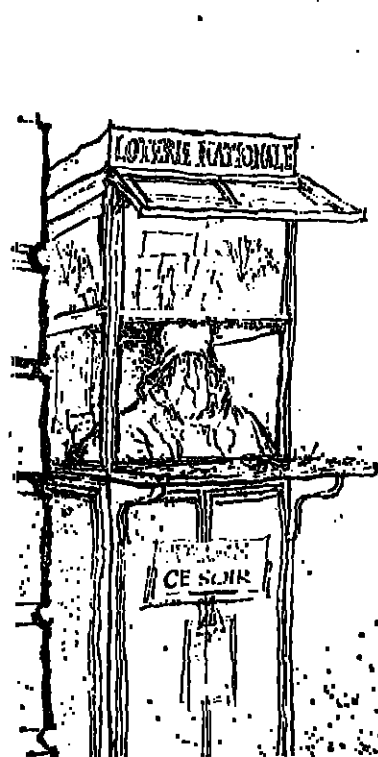
Poetic circles

By Maurice Richardson

DEREK STANFORD:
Inside the Forties
242pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £6.95.

In his sociological study of the concept of genius, Lange-Richbaum compares the bohemian milieu to the bed of compost round an orchid. From it, surrounded by side-shoots and underground, representing minor artists, camp-followers, non-starters, sprouts the great one. But only when blossom-time comes is it possible to identify him. Until then the keenest horticultural student, the sharpest Soho talent-spotter, is often hopelessly mistaken, especially as there may not be any genuine efflorescence for several seasons.

Most authors of literary memoirs write historically, when the flower-show is past and gone and the growths can be arranged in some order of precedence. Derek Stanford is more democratic. He might be following the injunction of the Third Zen Patriarch: "To set up what you like against what you dislike, this is the disorder of the mind." He can be equally enthusiastic about the poetry of David Gascoyne and the poetry of John Donne, the only swans. And he follows their flights in a zesty style that sometimes suggests the Victorian sporting chronicler: "added to which there were the attractions of her person,



line, a terra-cotta pot for an orange tree, a diamond ring, a bad original painting, a wicker basket made by the blind. . . . Trained on childhood games, one's brain begins wildly to suspect that it should be committing all these things to memory. 'I could buy children's furniture or students' briefcases on a bicycle,' drones on the incredible acquisitive fantasist, proving to my satisfaction that if there's one thing missing from the sense of abundance Americans enjoy at home, it's

the womb-like feeling of not having to move in order to enjoy it. "Second hand cars, foreign and domestic, were at hand for my inspection. If I happened to want a passport to Rumania. . . . But did he? No such luck.

Once you have anthropomorphized it, about the worst thing you can do to a place is turn it into a literary. But Irwin Shaw hasn't got a miniature short story to tell like the way he lost his last apartment by lending it to a feckless and hypersociable girl—a pious inventory seems his only solution. His penultimate "Update" chapter is what he promises it will be: "a hopeful yet impossible journalistic attempt to catch up with time, the never-ending battle against fate and change, that the man at the typewriter always loses."

The man with the scratchy pen faces better, perhaps? A tiny, though Searle's almost audibly tinkling style is notoriously decorative and thus, for these purposes, perhaps unkind. There is a harmony of spirit between the older Paris and all that is dedicatedly nonsensical about Searle's line, and this has tended to suppress his fantasy; though there is one lovely tableau, both fantastical and friendly, where one of those amazing trifid-like wrought-iron growths that decorate the entrances of old Métro stations is seen beginning to struggle out (and die) along the *trotoir*.

His view of the Montparnasse Tower, rearing up blankly behind the typical scribbled chains of a cobble street, seems to be a cycle, it writes, "because everything in Paris ends at a café table. You are expecting no one to join you. On this day you want to be alone." Oh pshaw.



ing is that the greatest offence against Searle's aesthetic sensibility is a straight line. In such a mood, he is always in danger of becoming merely quaint.

So you return to the text. There is still a chapter of *Paris! Paris!* to go. It is called "Departure". To your surprise, you discover Shaw has installed you in the right place at last, but has dragged up the worst possible reasons for putting you there. "You could be a café table," he writes, "because everything in Paris ends at a café table. You are expecting no one to join you. On this day you want to be alone." Oh pshaw.

Jerry & Sally & Richard & Ruth

By Michael Irwin

JOHN UPDIKE:
Marry Me
303pp. André Deutsch. £3.50.

Marry Me is likely to sound trite in summary. Set in Connecticut in the early 1960s it is the story of a love affair. Jerry Conant and Sally Mathias are thirty years old; each is married and the parent of three children. They come to feel that they must divorce in order to start a new life together. But when Jerry is willing enough to leave his wife, Richard, with whom she has been at odds for some time, Jerry finds it painfully difficult, for a mixture of religious and personal reasons, to part from his wife and children. For six months he vacillates between the two women. He makes a series of apparently final choices, each of which collapses into its opposite. Both his wife and his lover urge him to be decisive, but he desperately hopes that someone or something will make his mind up for him.

"This is not a situation hitherto unexplored in fiction," concedes the blurb, as well it might. Everything depends on the purpose of the story and the quality of the telling. John Updike shows himself, as always, to be a craftsmanlike and elegant narrator. *Marry Me* is structured with precision, but unobtrusively so. Effectively the story is limited to the two couples concerned. At any moment the action could be given a decisive turn by the disclosure of a previous affair between Richard Mathias and Jerry's wife, Ruth.

The author contrives an eventual resolution, appropriately complex and pharisaic, throughout his moves easily between the realistic and the symbolic: episodes or details apparently random take on figurative significance and serve as commentary or omen. Within the tidy framework John Updike is faithful to the messiness of the functions, the banalities of an extramarital affair. He is an acute observer of shifts of mood or perspective, of sudden glances or private dilemmas of love. *Marry Me* has a page-to-page liveliness and plausibility that makes for easy reading.

Off the road

By Eric Korn

JACK KEROUAC:
Doctor Sax
217pp. André Deutsch. £3.50.

This was Kerouac's favourite book: it's easy to see why. It was much abused by the critics: it's easy to see why. It was, twenty years after its appearance, the most widely read of the Francophone expatriate community from Quebec, land of exiles (as it seemed then) looking back to a lost Brittany, land of miracles. It is a good pedigree for nostalgia.

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But all these are virtues that I see rather than feel. Somehow, despite the accomplishment, the general effect is thin, tinny. Much of the dialogue we find comfortably at home in an easy-going romantic bestseller:

She looked down into the empty parking lot and asked, "Jerry, how can I live without you?" "The same way I live without you. By not living most of the time."

"Let's not talk about it. Let's not spoil our day."

People in love, of course, do resort to cliché: those recurrent trite phrases that have been used so often that they have lost all meaning. But one would need to know a great deal more about those who voice them. John Updike's characters remain shallow, and it is easy to see why. He invests so much of his creative energy, so much of his intellectual resources, in awareness, small sensual experiences, that more important kinds of information have to be conveyed hastily, and remain inert. A snack can seem portentous:

The wine was not last night's wine, but a dry hordeau, so pale it glimmered green, as if with the

Odd one out

By Jane Miller

CHARLES WEBB:
Blisnor
212pp. Collins. £4.20.

Few marriages look their best when reduced to affidavits and grounds for divorce, nor are they more easily understood when the participants are decked out for the final tournament in colours of innocence and guilt. It is Charles Webb's unerring directness and the apparent transparency of his characters' dialogue which make his story of a marriage split suddenly into public view an ludicrous, mystifying and bellerophon. Laura's search for her missing husband starts at the end of the road, in a house (a club), where her guide conducts her past some elegantly Athenian tableaux with the reassuring words, "You'd be hard put to find a more

ghost of the grape leaf, in the two fruit-stemmed glasses. The sandwich, salami and lettuce, filled his mouth like a plant, a leafy, peppy blend of apology and promise.

Conversely, vocational and spiritual crises can emerge as perfunctory: Jerry, defeated in his ambition to become a "name" cartoonist, and immersed, with their move to Greenwich in the organic and the mediocre and the familiar, suddenly dreaded death. Only religion helped. He read theology, Harth and Marcel and Berdyuev; he taught the children bedtime prayers.

Like some of John Updike's other novels, *Blisnor* is delicate in complexion but deficient in bone. Jerry Conant is supposed to be a designer of television commercials, but we gain no sense of his working life, or of what it might mean to him. Only belatedly, more than halfway through, does he reveal himself as a Christian names and a single broken collarbone. The context within which the characters act or talk—talk, mostly—is too theoretical for novels or deeds to have much defining force. Would Jerry miss his

children? Would Ruth be able to live on her own? We are not given the information that would enable us to make a reasonable guess. There are innumerable small recognitions: this is how lovers talk in bed; this is the sort of sweet one resorts to in a marital squabble; this sudden flaring into resentment or collapse into remorse rings true. But the plausibility resides almost entirely in such local effects. The characters are insufficiently realized for their behaviour to seem either predictable or unpredictable. Richard Mathias, who, alone of the four, is presented consistently from without, only one to achieve physical presence, a distinctive speech style, and some weight of identity.

These criticisms have, perhaps, as much to do with the purpose behind John Updike's novel as with the quality of its execution. What is the nature of the interest he set himself to take in the doings of these colourless people? One is most inclined to praise *Marry Me* for its honesty, for the faithfulness with which the author has recorded small humiliations, petty irritations. But why invent any such record? It is difficult to read this novel without an embarrassed sense of intruding on some private exercise in exploration, exorcism, transcription or hypothesis.

own never does, so that Laura's marriage and its past grow more impenetrable to her and to us with scrutiny. Her efforts to find her husband, get back her children and exonerate herself are defeated by the law and by a generalized mistrust which she encourages. Police and controlled through her ordeal, with the author seeming to guarantee her account of events, she is, none the less, as likely to arouse the reader's suspicions as she is her antagonists, so that when she finds her husband at last, cheerfully tussling with his lover's dressing-gown, the tables seem to have been turned. The wronged wife is intruding on an idyll.

This is a very funny novel, which does not simply mock the attitudes of its critics and exposes Laura's father responds to his son-in-law's defection with the words: "This is never had anything to do with homosexuals." Her husband's lover announces to her that "It's wrong my principles to help any one who feels superior to me." It is as though the law's own version of family life, with its rules, prohibitions and omissions, and its rituals of confession and testimony, is catching. Asked to account for her husband's defection, she produces statements of policy and belief in a language so lucid and acceptable as to oblige truth to combine with its alternatives to obscure just those realities the language was fashioned to express.

Crime class

ELIZABETH FERRARS:
The Pretty Pink Shroud
196pp. Collins. £2.95.

The *Pretty Pink Shroud* is another of Elizabeth Ferrars' novels of middle-class crime. Her most convincing characters are, in all senses of the word, very ordinary people: concerned, but not too deeply, with their own lives and their community; interested, but not too profoundly, in local affairs; curious, but not too curious, about their neighbours. The low-key prose tends to disguise the accuracy of her perception; and if the reader is not excited, he is reliably carried along by a very professional writer.

MILES TRIPP:
Once a Year Man
183pp. Macmillan. £3.50.

The hero meets his girlfriend once a year in different exotic hotels. He knows nothing about her, or the agency he supplies with information about medical mishaps, or his horrid son; indeed, for a successful management consultant he is implausibly but for the plot's sake, necessarily incurious. It is a pity the protagonists are puppets. Miles Tripp has dressed a new and topical plot for the international power game.

Murder verbatim

By Peter Dickinson

THOMAS THOMPSON:
Blood and Memory
450pp. New English Library. £4.95.

"A true story," asserts the cover of this large book which describes a Texas case celebre of "an early 1970s. A Houston oil millionaire, Ash Robinson, was obsessed with his daughter Joan that he would barely let her out of his sight; she became a champion horsewoman who, after some vicissitudes, married John Hill, a plastic surgeon, with a passion for music, though the made allegations of incest which forced the judge to declare a minor trial. The legal process, already hastened, slowed down still further, a year or so later, before a new trial could begin; the husband was now dead in his own home by a

man who had been hit by a truck, and the judge had to declare a minor trial. The legal process, already hastened, slowed down still further, a year or so later, before a new trial could begin; the husband was now dead in his own home by a

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Clean fun, please, we're British

By Philip French

CHARLES BARR:
Ealing Studios
200pp. Cameron and Taylor. £6.95.

Ealing Studios opened in the early 1930s. On its wall it carried the slogan "The Studio with the Team Spirit", though these words did not take on real meaning until the arrival of Sir Michael Balcon in 1935. Immediately, four factors, Mr Barr believes, went into forging the corporate identity: the little studio itself (with a minor pre-war tradition of cheap vehicles for music-hall stunts such as Will Hay, Gracie Fields, and George Formby); the village green in a peaceful west London suburb; the 1930s documentary movement, several of whose leading figures (notably, Cavalcanti and Harry Watt) were recruited to the Ealing team; the gradual convergence of the nation of a "people's war" around 1942-43; and the forceful personality of Balcon himself, a mixture of father, uncle, ship's captain, chairman, headmaster and rabbi. Balcon was a man with a mission: to make modestly budgeted entertainment movies of high quality and social purpose. In a memorandum shortly after the outbreak of war he wrote that "films in wartime are as much a part of national defence as guns or anything else", and what he had in mind was nearer to the ethos of Army Barracks of Current Affairs than to propaganda.

In 1945 he rethought this policy for peacetime, expressing his vision for the British cinema thus:

Every shade of opinion should be represented, and the scope of the films should go far beyond the purview of the government documentary. Fiction films which convey contemporary life in Britain in different sections of our society, films with an outdoor background of the British scene, screen adaptations of our literary classics, films reflecting the post

war aspirations not of governments or parties, but of individuals—these are the films that America, Russia and the Continent of Europe should be seeing now and at the first opportunity. When in 1955 the studio was sold to BBC Television (the company carried on for a further couple of years in a corner at Borehamwood), Balcon devised these characteristic words for a plaque—"Here during a quarter of a century were made many films projecting Britain and the British character".

Mr Barr has left to future historians the task of examining Balcon's career and complex motivation and the detailed development of the studio (Lindsay Anderson's *Making a Film* usefully describes the day-to-day production methods of an Ealing picture), and to other critics the more needed studies of the work of Ealing's two directors of international stature, Robert Hamer and Alexander Mackendrick. What he is concerned with are the progress of the pictures and how the studio, which was an conscious of itself as a microcosm of Britain at its best, reflected the mood of the country from the 1940s and 1950s. Early on he refers to a long forgotten Ealing movie *Cage of Gold* (1950), in which a young doctor is torn between a lucrative private partnership in Harley Street and a career offering different rewards with his GP father under the National Health. Harley Street is represented by a certain Dr Saville, the NHS by one Dr Mackendrick—a meaningful private joke referring to the fact that Victor Saville deserted Balcon for the bright lights of Hollywood in 1935 and Alex Mackendrick was the studio's most talented post-war recruit. Only at Ealing could such a joke have been made, could a political and professional choice of this kind had its consciously felt counterpart in the movie industry.

Barr sees the first complete expression of the Ealing spirit in *Suez* (1943), where the crippled merchant ship *Impulse* home becomes an image of Britain and of the people actually making the movie. Ealing became dedicated to the idea of national unity, to the notion of a group striving cohesively together ready to absorb those prepared to live by its rules

and to reject those who threaten its stability. Through the war years and the period of post-war austerity, this vision made sense and had its final flowering in *The Blue Lamp* (1950) which Barr interprets as a sort of dream of a whole community united—police, underworld and public—in pursuit of an outpost.

Barr speaks of two phrases that haunted him when thinking of the orthodox stream of Ealing films. Ernest Renshaw's reference to the British public's "poverty of desire" and E. M. Forster's description of people who are "afraid to feel". The first of the trio of 1949 classic comedies *Passport to Pimlico* essentially the work of the legendary Ealing screenwriter T. E. B. Clarke, is the typical, orthodox Ealing picture. Barr contrasts it with the superficially similar work of the directors who made the other great Ealing comedies of 1949—Hamer (*The Hush*) and Mackendrick (*Whisky Galore*). Their pictures, he argues, contain a

critique of Ealing values, bringing into question the cult of simple decency, sexual repression, the ethic of self-denial, the value of social stability, though scarcely in a flagrant or subversive fashion. They are Ealing directors at all right, but they are temperamentally closer to certain film-makers of that time (Ustinov, for example, or Powell and Pressburger) who were far removed from Dr Balcon's academy for middle-class English gentlemen.

After 1951, the Festival of Britain year in which, to use Michael Frayn's celebrated terminology, the do-gooding herbivores gave way to the hard-headed carnivores, Ealing entered a period of decadence. *The Barr*, *The Elf*, *Thunderbolt* (1953) and *Barnacle Bill* (1957) are whimsical betrayals of the Ealing spirit, proposing false communities and reeking of bogus nostalgia. They reflected perhaps the somnolent spirit of the times, but in falling to recognize the increasing complexities of the 1950s and the value

of conflict in an open society they indicated that the studio would have no part to play in the new British cinema that was to emerge after 1959. Barr sees Mackendrick's *Man in the White Suit* (1951) as the turning-point, the "definitive Ealing film", the one that deals directly with the singular society that both Britain and Ealing were becoming. More ingeniously, not to say fully, he treats the same director's last Ealing comedy, *The Ladykillers* (1955), as a symbolic account of post-war Britain in which the criminals stand for the 1945 Labour government and the old lady for the Tories repossessing the nation.

In its brief compass, this judicious, intelligently illustrated book, the first serious study of the one unquestionably important studio in Britain, covers a lot of ground and fully supports the case for approaching films as an inner history of a studio. Yet Mr Barr is scrupulous in his attention to what actually happens on the screen: to nuances of camera movement and in the art of comedy, of which he writes as delicately here as he did in his admirable book on Laurel and Hardy.



James Cagney and his wife singing what Ealing describes as "risky Yiddish ditties" in her remarkable collection of photographs *The Unrehearsed Years* (199pp, Cape £7.95), which draws on her twenty-five years as a photojournalist to illustrate "how it feels to be a woman"—from Queen Elizabeth II and Marilyn Monroe to migrant potato pickers, a bar girl in a Cuban brothel, nuns, veiled Middle Eastern women, mental patients, mothers and babies, wedding celebration in Clapham.

Getting in on the act

By Robert Morley

HOWARD THOMAS:
With an Independent Air
248pp. Weldon and Nicolson.
£5.95.

Christopher Isherwood has been back to Berlin, Lady Musley to Berchtesgaden, and Howard Thomas to Broadcasting House and Thames Television; indeed, he is apparently still at Thames beavering away as chairman. When an actor had the bad manners to direct a live transmission on one of his programmes, he told his general manager "to get him out of the picture and get on with the play". In his book, he does not tell us the actor's name but mentions he himself was watching from his home in Corvallis Cross. "Somehow," he records, "the other actors filled in the missing lines and the end of that play must have been more perplexing than usual."

Perplexing is the word for *With an Independent Air*. It really is an easy book to pick up again once you have put it down and who on earth, for instance, would want to read that when *The Brains Trust* discussed Vera Lynn, Mr Thomas's three secretaries could not decide whether to file the listeners' letters under Lynn, Vera or Trust, Brains? He never does tell us how the dilemma was resolved.

If not a great admirer of Talent himself (the generic term of the media for members of my profession), Mr Thomas is extravagantly fond of those who, like himself, employ them. He kept, for instance, a letter from Emile Littler, complaining him on the Vera Lynn show. May I send you my congratulations on your splendid production of *Sincerely Yours*. I do hope Miss Lynn and all concerned.

Pip, pip, pip

By David Wilson

DON WIDENER:
Lemmon
247pp. W. H. Allen. £4.95.

Everyone likes Jack Lemmon. In his films, rubber face crumpling in innocent astonishment at the world's corruption, he projects a ruffled amiability. His screen image, to judge from the testimony of friends and colleagues liberally assembled in Don Widener's biography, is mirrored in real life. He is a regular guy, untroubled by success and the kind of salary he now commands, and no one has an unkind word for him. There's the thing you learn about a superstar: Mr Widener remarks in his introduction, "they really are super". This universal popularity which might have been best left unrecorded and left one must do a nude scene" says one English actress. "Jack Lemmon is the perfect partner".

There were failures—a Broadway disaster (the play was wrong)—as well as two Oscars. But we learn little about the man behind the mobile public face. Lemmon likes fishing but not raw fish, often plays golf on public courses, and is a leading light in the Hasty Pudding Club, which gave him his first real chance on the boards. But post-war New York was no place for aspiring actors; chances were few and young Lemmon divided his time between knocking on the doors of unresponsive agents and finding somewhere to sleep cheaply (even, at one raucous abode, in the bath). The Old Knickerbocker Music Hall, hatchery of many an embryo star, provided a rough but thorough

know and realize how much the popularity of Miss Lynn's programme and her sudden rise to stardom are due to the work of her producer. His first contact with her was in the office of C. B. Cochran, to whom he had submitted a radio script of the actor's biography. "Cochran," he tells us, "laid down his cigar and picked up the sheaf of typescript. Slowly he began to turn up the pages letting them fall from his fingers into the waste paper basket. 'I am sorry young man, but I want you to do better than that.'"

In 1944 he left the BBC because, as he puts it, originality seems to be valued more outside than inside that establishment and his feelings were hurt when the Corporation removed his credit from all announcements of *Brains Trust* programmes. In *Radio Times* and on the air. However, Professor Joad came to the rescue and when asked on the air the virtues he coveted most in others, unhesitatingly plumped for the organising genius of his pre-war days. "Brains Trust," comments Mr Thomas modestly, "a kindly gesture which meant I got my programme credit after all."

In order that Thames TV, the company which now employed him, should emerge as leader in current affairs and information programmes, he decided to play a trump card. He never did force his way into the network. His efforts to persuade rivals to show the programme before most of Britain was about proved unsuccessful, although he did force the issue with the dour-faced Royal Personnel biographer. Mr Thomas's demands for prime time went unheeded. Eventually Low Grade promised that if more people ever watched his Lordship on Thames than on his own show, May I send you my congratulations on your splendid production of *Sincerely Yours*. I do hope Miss Lynn and all concerned.

training in the art of holding an audience. His break came when he landed the lead in a Russian melodrama, enacted on the second floor of the Ethnological Dance Studio. From there progress was rapid but exhaustive: a summer stock, radio serials, a television sitcom, a series with his future wife in those pioneering days when the box was live and peopled by writers like Chingy and directors like John Frankheimer and Arthur Penn.

Lemmon remembers his appearance in *Some Like It Hot* (1959) as a happy day and the recollection suits Mr Widener's anecdotal method. The film career, which began opposite Judy Holiday in *Cukor's It Should Happen to You*, makes less entertaining reading. Lemmon stood up to Columbia notoriously waspish boss Harry Cohn, who wanted to change his name to Lennon to forestall a fruitless critical joke. He worked with John Ford on *Mister Roberts*, and learnt to respect the old master's salty tongue. Hollywood friends fill in the gaps between films: Robert Mitchell, brewing aphrodisiacs in Tobago, Lemmon sharing a cab with a giggy Princess Margaret after a night-club binge, Lemmon and Curtis testing their drag outfits for *Some Like It Hot*, by parading round the ladies' room in the studio, summarily. (The flattery of friends is noncommensally banal. Lemmon has, says one of them, "the grace to make a fool of himself"; his biographer periodically insists on his deeply imbedded sense of humour... and Old World courtesy).

There were failures—a Broadway disaster (the play was wrong)—as well as two Oscars. But we learn little about the man behind the mobile public face. Lemmon likes fishing but not raw fish, often plays golf on public courses, and is a leading light in the Hasty Pudding Club, which gave him his first real chance on the boards. But post-war New York was no place for aspiring actors; chances were few and young Lemmon divided his time between knocking on the doors of unresponsive agents and finding somewhere to sleep cheaply (even, at one raucous abode, in the bath). The Old Knickerbocker Music Hall, hatchery of many an embryo star, provided a rough but thorough

sent Mountbatten my cheque. He lit a new cigar and added, 'Chew at the price, wasn't it?'

If it's impossible to dislike Vera Lynn, why then is it so hard to like Mr Thomas? Why does one resent his photograph on the dust-cover of *Brains Trust* and his name in the biography. "Cochran," he tells us, "laid down his cigar and picked up the sheaf of typescript. Slowly he began to turn up the pages letting them fall from his fingers into the waste paper basket. 'I am sorry young man, but I want you to do better than that.'"

In 1944 he left the BBC because, as he puts it, originality seems to be valued more outside than inside that establishment and his feelings were hurt when the Corporation removed his credit from all announcements of *Brains Trust* programmes. In *Radio Times* and on the air. However, Professor Joad came to the rescue and when asked on the air the virtues he coveted most in others, unhesitatingly plumped for the organising genius of his pre-war days. "Brains Trust," comments Mr Thomas modestly, "a kindly gesture which meant I got my programme credit after all."

Even a carefully researched visit to Hollywood today will reveal little trace of the faded city's golden past. Portions of two crumbling backstage, a street whose pavement is inscribed with the names of stars; the forecourt of Grauman's Chinese Theatre with actors' footprints in cement. And that's it. David Selznick said, as early as 1935, that Hollywood was like Egypt, full of the crumbling pyramids today it seems nothing short of a miracle that the village set built in 1930 for *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Frankenstein* is still in use, the only fragment of those days to be left available for examination. Even the long-awaited project for a Hollywood museum seems fated not to materialize until all the objects it might have housed have been dissipated. All the more reason then to take the prospect of a scholarly addition to the recent flood of nostalgic cinema books, especially if it throws an unfamiliar light on how the place in its heyday really worked.

It is difficult however to be sure whether Richard Koszarski's *Hollywood Directors 1914-1940* should be commended for its scholarly, some fascinating corners of screen history, or dismissed as a research student's over-zealous marshalling of material which far the most part has little general interest. It might have been better filled away as reference material for other students. From all manner of sources, fan magazines as well as loaned periodicals, he has unearthed a series of articles on filmcraft allegedly written by famous directors of Hollywood's childhood and adolescence, and more particularly of the silent 1920s, a period when the craft of film-making, many people still think, was at its height. I am not sure, because as the author admits, many of the pieces were written for publicity purposes and are likely to have been ghosted. Taking them at their face value, however, the historian at least will find a number of items of genuine interest.

Ernest Lubitch, he of the celebrated "gitch," describes his method of retiring for two or three months with a battery of scriptwriters and a copy of some discarded European play to emerge triumphant with a scintillating masterpiece of cinematic wit such as *Some Like It Hot*. Slavko Vorkapich, the montage genius, gives a comprehensive 1930 account of it without ever mentioning the word "montage", which had not then been coined. (Vorkapich calls it "thinking visually.") William Cameron Menzies, the art director, states something obvious but noteworthy forgotten, that a film should be "a series of fixed and moving pictures, a fixed composition as Cecil B. De Mille explained the idea of his penchant for framing costume dramas between modern endpieces: exhibitors simply would not book costume dramas. Chaplin with typical pomposity describes his object in filmmaking as "to express certain phases of life and emotion in as artistic a manner as my talent and equipment will allow me". Rex Ingram describes with wonderment "the rapid develop-

ment of the cinema from nickelodeon days, when its choicest tales were contained but a dozen seats" to an art "most certainly ahead of the spoken drama". Reich von Strohm defends himself against the charge of extravagance: "How can a director be expected to turn out an artistic work if he is ever conscious of money, of an amount he is supposed to spend?" A forgotten lady director of 1920, Ida May Park, explains her vocation:

It demands so comprehensive a knowledge of the arts and sciences that it is particularly difficult to describe. To the almost unlimited mental demands on the director is added the necessity of an invulnerable physique.

Mack Sennett describes how, after the rough-and-ready stage, his comedies grew shorter and shorter as he ran the show over and over again for audiences of actors, mechanics, scene-shifters and counting-room clerks, ruthlessly eliminating any scenes which failed to get a laugh. Edmund Goulding, against the trend in 1928, welcomes the "speaking picture" as an extension of a growing dramatic form:

The infant industry has taken the ribbon from her hair. She has put away some of her brightest toys—she is growing up. She may have a child one day, and that child may be television, but that's another story. These flashes of insight and unwitting self-criticism have to be sought out hidden as they are in mainly dull little essays which may not be very long but make dreary reading for any but the most committed researcher. Nor have the author or his publisher gone out of their way to make the book attractive. It is expensive, at least a hardback; the title is easily confused with others, and unenlightening us to the contents. To get at the gist is uphill work, and one's eye slowly glazes over. Yet the book plainly deserves a place on the shelves of that small number of people who treasure each new insight into Hollywood's past, into the time when the big names were a law unto themselves, seldom required either to understand their audience or to understand the status of ordinary mortals. It's a pity that it looks more like a monument than a tribute.

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A star to steer by

By Michael Mason

PAULINE KAEI:
Reeling
197pp. Marion Boyars. £9.95 (paperback, £4.95).

The titles that Pauline Kael has chosen for her collections of film reviews usually contain a croc element: *I Lost It at the Movies*, *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang, Going Steady*. Eroticism is perhaps also her latest title, *Reeling*. The comic and the sensory at least are unmistakably present—included in the idea of a catholic response to film which is more clearly and neatly expressed by this single word than by any of the previous titles. Film is an object (a reel of emulsion-coated cellulose acetate) and, at the opposite extreme, an experience—which may make you reel. Reeling occurs both in the projection room and in the auditorium. Pauline Kael does not deny any of the responses—from the sensory to the technical—that the multiple nature of film permits.

But, as her readers will know, Kael's concern, especially in the sensory and of this spectrum, is the screen rather than the frame, the image rather than the emulsion. She is also chiefly interested in Hollywood. In the extended essays, which feature films which are contemporary, distinctive, in other words, her chosen primary material coincides to an unusual extent with the experience of the ordinary filmgoer in her country. Here is the groundwork of her great celebrity for film among film critics, herself a "star". Only in her numbness to the enchantments of plot is she sometimes regrettably out of tune with the lay audience: she neglects

Aldrich in this volume, and her review of *The Sting* mentions Redford's teeth and the wrinkles around Newman's eyes, but not the script-like narrative which explains both the popularity of the film and its title.

Pauline Kael writes about her material in an impressionistic, colloquial, almost a stylistic reeling, that can finely hit off phrases of our experience in the cinema. Admittedly she does not always work hard to do this. *Reeling* is said to exhibit a "cool" that is "dank and narcissistic". Whatever this phrase means must apply also to itself. But a similarly risky vocabulary is elsewhere, unfortunately vividly, "convincingly gassy" (*Rip Torn in Payday*), "swartzy" (the cinematography of *Mean Streets*), "splintering" (the directorial style of *Don't Look Now*), "delicately rapacious" (*Julie Christie in the same film*), "discoquiesc II. Rider Hag" (*The Yerkers*).

Pauline Kael is particularly good at, as the last three examples will suggest (and also "Clerks" would be), to find an actor no one could hardly call him a bad actor. Although she makes astute judgments of value about films she is almost always right, at least to my taste. Sometimes her judgments are strikingly against the run of critical opinion, as when she disparages *The Night Porter*, *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, *Raging Bull*, and *Westworld*. Two of the films, most praised in the volume, *The Long Goodbye* and *Mega Streets*, are now well regarded by other critics, but Pauline Kael was one of the few to discern their merit at first.

Very much in this line is Pauline Kael's way of damning certain films because of moral attitudes she rather heatedly ascribes to their makers: Casablanca's *A Woman Under the Influence* is bad, in part, because "it's never suggested that there's something wrong with Mabel Keaton's not getting herself together". But it is not clear that this statement is correct, let alone relevant. In fact, Mabel Keaton is not doing justice to her own sensibility here; most people do not realize how sympathetic to Mabel the film is meant to be.

In this context, as elsewhere, Pauline Kael gets in a middle about the one criterion that she does try to apply with some consistency in these reviews, the criterion of openness in film. In keeping with her approval of the open-ended *Mis Kael* blames *A Woman Under the Influence* for its "textbook" quality, but in the next paragraph she says about the same film: "The film is bad because it is too closed to decipher" some parts of the dialogue. The book's two heroes are *Alman* and *Bertolucci*, so the vocabulary about an open-ended, open-ended feeling that does apply to the first is used also about the second, to whom it certainly doesn't, or not in the same sense. I wonder whether Pauline Kael's talk about

open-endedness is not a rationalised response to what is always at work in cinema: the sense of artistic pressure continuously exerted, so that a film becomes as rich in its detail as good music. She is finding the wrong words for the right feelings. She actually attacks, and attacks whom she does not like, for being too "spontaneous" and "not a planner".

Mis Kael not only likes the "expansionist" directors, she believes that they have changed the character of recent cinema. This indeed is the reason she offers in her foreword for making up a collection of film reviews. But (even dropping Bertolucci from her list) do *Alman*, *Coppola*, *Scorsese* really belong together as a group or, if they do, why does it not have a place in it? Michael Rischel, Pauline Kael's given to instant epoch-making, prefacing her collections of pieces... In 1965 films were "a piece of... Cinema is going to come... rarefied, private appeal" but lacking in audience appeal. In 1973 (I lost it at the Movies) she says: "I am sure that the new wave of films was badly made (Deeper into Movies).

These are defensible views, and not inconsistent with one another. But does film history change so quickly, and in so convenient a way? Miss Kael's story telling in these reviews is a contemporary culture scores some brilliant successes in this volume—for example, in concluding *The American Dream* and *Last Tango in Paris*—but she is not always right. In *Reeling*, as in *Reeling*, she is not always right. In *Reeling*, as in *Reeling*, she is not always right. In *Reeling*, as in *Reeling*, she is not always right.

The long journey home

By George Shepperson

ALEX HALEY:
Roots
688pp. Hutchinson. £5.95.

Not long after the end of the Second World War, a Broadway success on the prejudices endured by an Afro-American officer on his return to the white-dominated South was brought to Britain, and it introduced many of those who were fortunate enough to see it to the complexities of race relations in the United States. The title of this play was *Deep Are the Roots*. Three decades later, with the same radical metaphor in its title, another product of the American imagination has crossed the Atlantic which will introduce very many more to these complexities and should demonstrate to them that the roots of the American dilemma go deep indeed, extending widely outside the South and over the entire into the veritable heartland of the blacks.

Alex Haley's *Roots*, like those other bestsellers which were set among the racial conflicts of the United States, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) and *Gone With the Wind* (1936), has not crossed the ocean unheralded. Mr Haley spoke on Radio 3 about his search for African ancestors and his broadcast was printed in *The Listener*. Parts of his quest for his African roots were published in the more widely read *Reader's Digest*; and his saga has reached out, through resources of publicity far beyond those available to Harriet Beecher Stowe and Margaret Mitchell, to an initial British audience on BBC 1, at a peak viewing hour, with an interview by Michael Parkinson and the serialization in six episodes of the record-breaking American television adaptation of *Roots*. It is to suggest that this is the BBC's contribution to the Time on the Cross debate, much of this British television anti-slavery orgy has been conducted over Easter.

The effect of all this advance publicity may be to frighten the serious reader away from *Roots*. This would be a pity. It is a serious book; and Alex Haley is a serious writer who has already made an important contribution to American life and letters through his part in the composition of *Mandela* X (1964). His search for the origins of his slave ancestors, however, with its climax in his discovery of the identity of "the African whose Mandingo blood and vocabulary had been handed down a long line of Afro-Americans from the eighteenth century to the twentieth, should ensure for him and *Roots* a position in American history and literature which every generation of the past, present and future of the United States must respect and with which he or she will be compelled to come to terms.

Although *Roots* is cast largely into the form of a historical novel about Kunta Kinte, Alex Haley's Mandingo ancestor, whose name he has thrust brutally as a slave into the British North American colonies at the age of sixteen in 1767, it is not just another glorious slave story of the Mandingo brand. As the brief, concluding autobiographical chapters indicate—should any unvaried reader not already be aware of it—Mr Haley has been engaged in that oldest of human occupations after the search for food and shelter: the quest for identity; the search for self with which all men and women, slave or free, irrespective of race, are engaged in one way or another all their lives. "I am: yet what I am none care or know" was the *cri de coeur* of John Clare whose eighteenth-century roots were pulled up as ruthlessly in the *Keyhole* as Kunta Kinte's. Alex Haley, through twelve years of arduous research and writing, forces us to know and, if we have any conscience at all, to care about his identity and that of millions of unrecorded, unrespected Afro-American men and women. *Roots*, most prophetically, concludes with "the hope that the study of our people can help to alleviate the legacies of the fact that preponderantly the histories have been written by the winners".

Alex Haley is, of course, not the first Afro-American writer who has felt the urge to display his roots to the world. W. E. B. Du Bois in

The Souls of Black Folk (1903) non-decided on the significance of the African song which his great-grandmother used to sing; and he returned to his roots when he left America for Ghana in 1961 and died there two years later. Margaret Walker in her novel *Jubilee* (1966), did like Alex Haley into family memories to present an Afro-American version of Civil War and Reconstruction, employing the real name of her great-grandfather, Randall Ware the blacksmith, whose memory will be evoked for some readers of *Roots* by Alex Haley's picture of the sturdy independent blacksmith, Tom Murray of Reconstruction Tennessee, on his mother's side of the family. And there is, to be sure, Frank Yerby's neglected historical novel, *The Man from Dahomey* (1937), which tells the story of the West, the uprooted African chief who became the slave, Westley Purks, in a poor white plantation in Virginia, just as Kunta Kinte was compelled to assume the name of Toby Waller on another Virginia plantation.

One of Frank Yerby's aims in his novel was "to correct, as far as possible, the Anglo-Saxon reader's historical perspective"; and he attempted to show how the "cruel system" of North American slavery had destroyed the high, and in many ways admirable, culture of the African, reducing in the process... [a] proud, industrious warlike people... to the status of tortured, neurotic, self-hating caricatures of humanity from which the Afro-American minority is hopelessly, and at long last, beginning to

Jars across the sea

By Benedict Kiely

RICHARD STIVERS:
A Hail of the Dog
Irish Drinking and American Stereotype
193pp. Pennsylvania State University Press. £10.10.

What we are investigating, says Richard Stivers, the Irish-American can propensity for habitual drunkenness, whether addictive or not; and, although on the second page of *A Hail of the Dog* he writes a paragraph whose density would stop a Sherman tank, and although he has a mastery of academic cliché that could only be exercised by a very sober man, the curious reader should not despair nor desist.

For Professor Stivers has assembled some most interesting material even if, in the end, all he has to tell us is that the Irish do drink, and drink a lot; and that Irish-Americans have, to some extent, upheld a noble tradition. Which we know already, and thanks be to God we are not fond of it, and have gone in the name of God as it is said. Father Theobald Mathew remarked when he signed his name on the roll of temperate, or abstainers. The phrase is now commonly used as a toast.

Professor Stivers has gone carefully over reports, statistics, other works somewhat similar to his own, written by scholars somewhat similar to himself; but his actual research in the field seems to have been slight even if he did live for a while in Galway and, I hope, enjoyed the races. He says modestly: "I sampled male-group drinking in several rural and urban areas 1966-69." A chief was among them. And I sampled? Glasses of stout? My own experience has been wider which may, indeed, make the professor's point.

What he really has been investigating is—as an American lady writer in the *New Yorker* once asked—where was Father Mathew, and why when Mother Mathew sat at home, the silver shining in her hair, and the brow not unnaturally wrinkled with care, rocking the cradle with one foot, as an eloquent temperance reformer is reputed to have said, and wiping her eyes with the other. Father Mathew, of course, was in the piper at the corner, knocking back the balls of malt and playing uncle to all the young and middle-aged bachelor-boys who had been driven by poverty into chastity and by chastity into drink: a version of

emerge". Alex Haley's book, it has a dissimilar aim. None of his ancestors, however, is depicted in *Roots* as a caricature of humanity, although some of them, such as that splendid character, Chicken George, who brought his white master home and fortune and ultimately ruin in cockfighting contests in the Old South, sometimes adopted a self-demeaning pose in order to protect themselves against the caprices of white ownership. *Roots*, in spite of all its power and readability, has its literary shortcomings. It could be argued that the story line is developed too chronologically; and that, when all allowance is made for the projected second volume by Mr Haley in which the ramifications of his search for his ancestors will be examined, the story of the King and the descendants in *Roots* would have gained in interest and force if the autobiographical elements about Alex Haley and his family had been introduced at the beginning of the book, and referred to occasionally throughout it instead of being relegated to the twenty-five pages at its end.

Furthermore, there is a tension between fact and fiction in *Roots* which does not always work to its advantage. The main outline and much of the detail of Alex Haley's story of his own and his ancestors' part in the African diaspora is undoubtedly true; and he has clearly taken great pains to check his sources with reputable scholars such as the doyen of academic experts on the use of oral traditions in Africa, Jan Vansina. But there are

the three vows that not even James Joyce thought of.

The status of the uncle in Irish society would seem to have had a lot to do with the Irish addiction to drink. Flann O'Brien might have had something to say on that matter for in his novels there is a certain prevalence of uncles. There is a man in Galway—Professor Stivers may even have met him—who when he used to drink used to say, "I take after my uncle, not after my mother. My father knew when to stop."

That Galway man, though, did stop, but sober as he is today, he might not recognize his past sins under the heading "The Irish Family and the Remembrance of the Avunculate". He might also have to struggle a bit with this passage:

The avuncular relationship did reappear, albeit in the disguised form of the male group. The male group, which I have termed the "Irish group" (p. 167-168). It represented the religious interest in chastity, the family interest in celibacy, and the economic interest in single landlessness. Religious teachings demanding chastity, the family economics imposed celibacy on all the male offspring save he who was to inherit. Young men were socialized into all-male groups whose older members established avuncular-type relationships with younger members. The male group as institution, then, provided a framework for the avunculate.

There is a good deal of sense and truth in all that even if at times it is skillfully disguised and the heaviness of phrase might be inclined to drive the frivolous to the singing of the celebrated "questionnaire changed first, perhaps, in the Bronx by a benighted Irish nephew searching for his long-lost and heroic uncle—Stephen and Paddy, as the more mature Joyceans call him, Telemachus and Ulysses: Have you seen me Uncle Dan McCann?"

A typical bit of a Galway man. Left the county Galway "how the year of 'eighty-two". If anyone ever living here has seen or heard of him anywhere, he'll oblige me: if he helps to find me Uncle Dan McCann."

The bare historical outline would seem to be that in these islands in the eighteenth century most people drank who liked it and could not do and nobody much minded. Hodge had his ale and Paddy had his poteen, and Sandy something similar, and the gentry and the Kerry man, who were well placed, the

times when Mr Haley seems to have been carried away by the sheer romance of his West African ancestors' wanderings. Did they, for example, really go "on a journey of many moons, heavily laden with elephants' teeth, precious stones, and gold, to the black city of Zimbabwe" which is in south central Africa far away from the trans-Saharan trade routes of West African merchants? Above all, in this conflict in *Roots* between imagination and reality, there is the problem of the veridicality of the dialogue and the thoughts which Alex Haley puts into the mouths and minds of his characters, African and Afro-American. His portrayal of sex, especially adolescent sex, often seemed to me to be translating the intimacies of eighteenth-century America into the sexual images and practices of America in the second half of the twentieth century.

But I found other aspects of *Roots* utterly convincing. When I lived for a while on the South Side of Chicago in the 1950s and was studying Afro-American relations with Africa, I soon became aware of the value of oral tradition carefully preserved by black urban as well as rural families, particularly after I had been invited to a party at the house of a black American family at which they were celebrating a visit to the United States of a Yoruba from Nigeria with whom they had established a genealogical relationship. I have, therefore, never doubted that Alex Haley might find his ancestors in Africa. And that they were Mus-

smuggling, had their claret and brandy and all went merry as a marriage bell. Even those decent strict people the Presbyterians were hard at it, as Professor Stivers testifies when he writes on communal drinking customs, occupational drinking and occasional drinking—which would seem to mean drinking on every occasion that offers an excuse for so doing. He quotes Norman Lennox as dealing very well with the way in which in Ireland these various motives were entwined.

When Fr Mathew preached (somewhat before my time) in my native village of Drumree, County Tyrone, the Presbyterian minister preached from the same altar amid scenes of wild, if sober, enthusiasm. The rectory of the established church stayed at home. Was it class distinction or did he prefer to commune with his claret? It is worth noting that the only thing any of the churches ever seemed to get together about in that land of Churchillian division was the noble cause of anti-bus.

Fr Mathew's movement and the later and still-flourishing (if that is the adjective for a tectonic organisation) Pioneer Total Abstinence Association, founded by the Jewish, Fr Cullen, created an odd dichotomy in the Irish: on one side, Mother Machree who had to keep the home together by her wiles, her prayers, her prayers, her prayers; on the other, Father Mathew's play-acting in modern Ireland it might seem at times that Mother Machree's sardle has been killing her and a lady with whom I discovered the book says that Professor Stivers was lucky not to have sampled Irish female-group drinking: he might not have lived to tell the tale.

However, this is a book on a serious topic and not a diatribe. Fr Cullen, by the way, was born in New Ross and when the town council went to put a plaque on the wall of the house he was born in, they had insisted to put it on the wall of the Old Tholal: for the house that Fr Cullen had been born in had regrettably been changed into a pub.

The members of the organization he founded wear a lapel-pin with a Sacred Heart of Jesus symbol to show they do not drink: it helps, too, when a young fellow is looking for a job. When I was in college a priest preached to us, from New Ross, that it was a sin to drink. He should be to testify to chastity. That never came to pass, but the possibility gave rise to much speculation among aspiring males. If a girl were to do it, it really, if you think it over, you will see what I mean.

lins also does not surprise me: I believe that the careful attention which is paid to Islam in *Roots* indicates an Islamic element in Afro-American religious culture which is too often overlooked. Indeed, *Roots* suggests that there are greater African arrivals among black Americans than is commonly supposed; and I wish very much that the great Afro-American student of African survivals in the United States, Lorenzo Turner, were alive today to relish this book.

Above all, two aspects of *Roots* impressed me deeply. The first was Mr Haley's demonstration of how and why whites in the slave South feared African survivals among their human property, and their profound desire, often accompanied by great brutality, to obliterate all memories and practices from ancestral Africa among their slaves. And the second was his depiction of the terrors of the transportation of the slaves from Africa to America across the Atlantic Ocean. It is a horror story which has often been told but rarely so convincingly or so movingly as in *Roots*.

Alex Haley's book was first published in the bicentennial year of the United States, but it is rather than by design. This was an accident, however, which may provide for future consideration of the significance of the bicentennial an element of design that was often lacking in those rather amorphous celebrations of the years about Americans and others, looking back on 1976, may come to see it as the time when the search for the roots of the United States of America was both symbolized and stimulated by one black man's book.

The Texan way of death

By Patricia Highsmith

HENRY P. LUNDGAARDE:
Murder in Space City
Cultural Analysis of Houston Homicide Patterns
269pp. Oxford University Press. £6.75.

The text of this book is not as racy as its title suggests. It is a serious, documented account of homicide in Houston, Texas, and an analysis of the peculiar laws that state which have permitted more than half the killers to escape punishment, even though caught. Texas is indeed a law unto itself, it has a constitution, and is the only state with the right to secede from the Union, a right which for economic reasons Texas has never chosen to exercise. Not for nothing is the state flag the "Lone Star". Murder in Space City will confirm most people's impression of the gun-toting Texan who takes the law into his own hands and even in the 1970s gets away with it.

The possession of arms, of course, plays a vital part. "I went home and got my gun" is a typical sentence in the killer's account of what happened in the bar-room, outside the house, in the back of a neighborhood. Article 1, Section 5, of the Constitution of Texas reads: "Every citizen shall have the right to keep and bear arms in the lawful defense of himself or of the State." At the same time Article 1151 of the Texas Penal Code states: "If any person shall willfully commit an assault upon another with a pistol, dirk, dagger, slung shot, sword cane, spear or knuckles made of any metal... while the same is being carried unlawfully by the person... he shall be deemed guilty of a felony, punishable by a fine not to exceed two hundred dollars or by imprisonment not to exceed two years... or in penitentiary five."

In 1969, 86 per cent of all killings involved firearms; but fewer than 10 per cent of all police cases included a charge for the violation of Article 1151. An angry man with a gun may kill the person who has "aggravated" him, and escape with the above penalty—indeed hardly one in ten would ever go to court. The penal code, Henry Lundgaard remarks, says nothing on the subject of damages, which one may assume is seldom if ever brought up—damages, that is, if the victim is merely maimed and not killed. Few damaged people, he says, have the money to hire a lawyer, but the costs to the assaulter would be formidable: "If the assaulter ever did think this out, he might reasonably conclude that it would be better to kill his victim than simply assault him."

Is your mind boggling? It will boggle every ten pages or so as you read about these laws, case-histories, and court rulings, as Professor Lundgaard continually reminds us of what he means "cultural analysis". There is a difference in Texas law between "fortnight" assault and assault with "slyness", for instance. Texas abhors the latter, while the former is somehow manly, natural and even admirable. You may at once think of the Texas law on capital murder, which implies premeditation and is bound to be worse than impulse which borders on manslaughter—maybe. Certainly this is true in Texas law, but a few minutes of thought and decision can go into a Texas murder, and it will still be called "normal" and given a "no bill" by the court. It is not as simple as a Western film, but that is the closest analogy, and it has at least the virtue of making it all seem familiar.

Among the case-histories: a man was realized that his house was a few yards ahead and went back on foot to speak to friend and wife (his own) who were sitting in the front seat. What he saw aggravated him enough for him to go back to his own car, get his shotgun, return and shoot the man in the head—over the wife's protestations. The story is told in the wife's own words, and she says she tried to stop her husband from shooting, then begged him not to shoot her. "You're not good enough for shooting", he replied: "I'm just going to beat the hell out of you." It came out that the wife and the friend had been having an affair for two years, that the wife had asked for a divorce, but the husband had refused. In both these cases, the killers went quite free.

For all its cachet as the centre of America's space programme and site of world-renowned hospitals, the population of Houston lacks the sophistication of Paris, London or even New York. To put it plainly, people are more primitive. Professor Lundgaard teaches anthropology, and once in a while makes the sort of comment a sociologist might make. He speaks of "the ghetto excuse" in the case of a black man's advances towards a black woman at a segregated lunch counter in a drugstore where they are having a snack. The woman, a stranger to him, says so, and he replies: "Don't get all set up, lady, we are all coloured folks here together."

How, when and where violent behaviour may be employed to achieve some goal... is culturally determined... It is at the bottom of the social class hierarchy that one sees the greatest discrepancies between what anthropologists traditionally have described as "ideal" versus "real" culture; that is, many people who early in life become exposed to such ideological premises as "all men are created equal" or "any person who excludes himself can become a success" may witness, first hand, how only a small percentage of those around them actually realize

even approximate these ideals in everyday life... Deprivation—whether economic, social or psychological—does not, of course, by itself lead individuals to pursue violent solutions to life's problems. It is rather psychological, social and cultural factors that contribute to establish violent behaviour as a viable and alternative strategy for survival and existence.

This is from a chapter called "Homicide among Friends and Associates". Professor Lundgaard might have pointed out that "created equal" meant equal in civil rights, not ability, when the phrase was written into the American Declaration of Independence. The few who vent their emotions have this "I want it now" attitude, which extends from the credit card at one end to, at the other, armed robbery which may lead to murder. Houston has all the ingredients for violent acquisition of the cash desired, but then so has New York, but New York State's rate of homicide is 7.2 versus Texas's 11.3. More wives kill their husbands in Texas than the other way round. The "no bill" verdict outnumbers all the other equally benign decisions such as "dismissed", "no charges filed" and "not guilty".

Murder in Space City has an index, a list of references, a section of notes on each chapter, fifty pages of graphs in an appendix. There is a graph of residential distances between killer and victim, another of frequency of homicide on each day of the week, and a graph of the favourite, Sunday next. Murders by blacks outnumber those by whites by three to one, so not all the killers see themselves as modern-day heroes of the Old West. The other big racial group in Houston are the Mexican-Americans, who by the way commit only one-third, by percentage, of the number of murders that whites commit.

More aberrations: killers of relatives receive the least punishment, those of strangers, a gun-station sentence, for instance, the most. But this is not a book which prompts the question "Can it happen here?", wherever here may be, because few if any corners of the world have the wild and brief history of Texas—brief since the state was founded in 1845, and the Mexicans and made it a State in 1845—a history of frontier law awkwardly coupled with a derivative of English Common Law.

The momentum of guilt

By Hugh Brogan

ANTHONY SCADUTO:
Scapato
The Truth about the Lindbergh Kidnapping
512pp. Secker and Warburg. £6.50.

No cause célèbre is complete until someone has attempted to upset the verdict to rescue Dreyfus from Devil's Island, so to speak, and in spite of a sensible distrust of police, lawyers, judges and the press, I approached Anthony Scaduto's reappraisal of the Lindbergh affair with the utmost scepticism. Alas, once more (as I often during the Watergate affair) I discovered that I would have been better served by complete credulity—that is, by a willingness to believe the worst at every turn. By page 100 I was weakening; by page 200 I was convinced that Richard Hauptmann, the alleged kidnapper and murderer of Charles Lindbergh's little son, was indeed the victim of a gross miscarriage of justice.

Lindbergh, to be sure, was never a favourite of mine. His celebrated flight across the Atlantic was never quite the feat it was cracked up to be and his flirtation with the Nazis, his adamant opposition to American participation in Hitler's war, and his mean-minded second-rate or worse. He comes very badly out of Scapato's a muddled man of action incoherence in rescue his child (it seems likely that the interventions made matters worse) who ended by swearing to an untruth in court, an untruth (that he could recognize Hauptmann's voice) which, as much as anything else, sent the innocent carpenter to the electric chair, since the jury could not believe that the accused "Lindy" might be either a fool or a liar. Still, one must be sorry for the man; but for his notoriety the baby would not have been stolen, and but for that notoriety it might have been got back alive.

As it was, the little boy was kidnapped on March 1, 1932, and the press had a field day. The wretched police were unable to make any progress on the case. A ransom of \$50,000 was paid, but the baby was not restored; presently what was thought to be his body was found in the woods near the Lindbergh estate. Not until September 1934 was an arrest made: Richard Hauptmann, a German immigrant living in the Bronx, was found to have some \$14,000 of the ransom money in his possession. Since the recipient of the ransom had a heavy German or Scandinavian accent, and the police were desperate for a break in the case, they jumped to the conclusion that Hauptmann was both the kidnapper and the extortionist; and Mr Scaduto shows that they made sure of his conviction by manufacturing the evidence they needed, and by suppressing all the evidence which proved Hauptmann's alibi.

Mr Scaduto is too intelligent to experience a remorse (he worked for years on the police desk at the New York Post) to suppose that there was a conscious conspiracy to pervert justice. Only, since the authorities were totally convinced of Hauptmann's guilt, and since the great American public, whipped up by the press, of the past has been brought home to us, it would not do to risk an acquittal. So first one short cut was taken, and then another. Even so, Hauptmann would probably have got off had he received a proper trial. But his chief counsel (Lindbergh's lawyer) had been organized) was a drunk, the judge maddened the jury, and the mob jammed the streets outside. Add to this the general shadiness of New Jersey government, and it would have been a miracle had Hauptmann survived.

Mr Scaduto has done much in proving, by patient honest argument, that Clarence Darrow was right when he said that no man should be executed on such flimsy evidence; and that a fair trial would have set Hauptmann free without a stain on his character (the ransom money seems to have been temporarily deposited with him by a swindler who afterwards disappeared on a visit to Germany, where he died; Hauptmann was left with no idea where he had got the money). It is to the author's credit that he does not claim to have done more. His book, written on a plan something like that of *The Quast for Corvo*, is designed simply to reopen the investigation (officially, it has never been closed). Nor until the files of the FBI and the New Jersey police are studied by impartial inquirers can any progress be made on the question of who kidnapped the baby if Hauptmann did not. Mr Scaduto shows that there are several plausible candidates; and for what it is worth I am convinced that the answer will involve links to the German community of southern New Jersey with that of the Bronx, where Hauptmann lived. The Texan note predominates throughout the story. Meanwhile, all one can do is to hope that Scapato's book will bring home to us the horror of Hauptmann's widow, who has never faltered in her belief in his innocence.

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DUTIES, etc.

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Application forms and further details of these vacancies may be obtained from Ministry of Defence CNI(R)46, Leeson House, Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8UY (01-430 6431) (01-430 6417).

Closing date for receipt of completed application forms: 15 May 1977.

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Enquiries to and applications from the Administrator, Claybury Hospital, Woodford Bridge, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 8BY. Telephone 01-504 7171, extension 142. Closing date May 6, 1977.

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Applications are invited for appointments to positions of Lecturers, Assistant Professors and above starting October, 1977, in the following specializations:

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Linguistics — 1 Female.
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The Dean of the Faculty of Arts,

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University of Riyadh,

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*plus 12% thereof as cost of living allowance.
**plus 50% of the Housing Allowance as Furniture Allowance paid only once and after taking up employment in Riyadh, or

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Suffolk County Council

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Application forms and further details may be obtained from the Personnel Officer (Recruitment) 14 City Square, Dundee DD1 1SP (01-524 2041, ext. 259). Completed forms should be lodged with the undersigned not later than May 6, 1977.

BORDON S. WATSON,
Town Clerk & Chief Executive
City Chambers,
Dundee DD1 3BY

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Applicants must be suitably qualified librarians who are prepared to accept initiation in implementing modern methods.

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FACULTY OF ARTS

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ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS	EITHER, holding Ph.D. plus 5 years of subsequent university teaching experience plus publications acceptable to Riyadh University. OR, holding Ph.D. plus Associate Professor title already conferred by a recognised and accredited University.	Arabic Arabic Arabic Arabic Arabic History History History History History History Mass-Communication Sociological Studies	Grammar and Syntax (1) Ancient Arabic Literature (1) Rhetoric and Criticism (1) Literature and Criticism (1) Philology and Phonetics (1) Islamic Archaeology (1) Ancient History and Archaeology (1) Archaeology (1) Ancient Civilizations (1) Islamic Arts (1) Medieval Islamic History (1) Islamic History (1) Modern Arabic History (1) Advertising (Art) (1) Sociology (1)—Female Social Work (1)—Female
ASSISTANT PROFESSORS	Ph.D.	Arabic Arabic Geography History History History Mass-Communication Mass-Communication Mass-Communication Sociological Studies English Language and Literature English Language and Literature English Language and Literature English Language and Literature English Language and Literature	Ancient Arabic Literature (1)—Female Grammar and Syntax (1)—Female Physical Geography (1)—Female Medieval Islamic History (1)—Female Islamic History (1)—Female European History (1)—Female Modern Arabic History (1)—Female Journalism (Journalistic Writing) (1) Mass-Media (International and Theoretical) (1) Public Relations (1) Broadcasting and T.V. (1) Social Work (1) Social Work (1)—Female Modern Novel and Earlier Periods** (1)—Female Modern Poetry and Earlier Periods** (1) Modern Poetry and Earlier Periods** (1) Drama—(preferably) in Post-Renaissance Drama, excluding Modern Drama** (1) Drama—(preferably) in Post-Renaissance Drama, including Modern Drama** (1)—Female
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TEACHING-ASSISTANTS	M.A. (at least Grade Very Good)	Geography	Geography (1)—Female

*Assistant Professors (Ph.D.) will be considered

**M.A. in same specialisation will be considered

(1) Applications should be sent (Registered) with curriculum vitae, testimonials and academic qualifications (unreturnable) and certified by the Foreign Ministry and the Saudi Embassy and marked "Employment Application" to

The Dean of the Faculty of Arts,
P.O. Box 2456, University of Riyadh,
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

(2) Only applications received within one month from the date of publication of this notice will be considered.
(3) Candidates chosen will only be notified at their enclosed address.

Saudi Arabia